

REMARKS

Favorable consideration and allowance is respectfully requested for claims 1-11 and 27-36 in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

At the outset, the undersigned and William G. Ackerman (Reg. No. 45,320) would like to express their appreciation to Examiner Lee for the courtesies extended during the personal interview conducted on February 20, 2001.

During the interview, the client's representative was allowed to make arguments against the use of the Masui reference. Masui was argued as non-analogous art as the claimed invention pertains to injection molding and not stamping as in Masui. The order of the steps was also argued as not being shown. The Examiner indicated that the steps were not in the order but that the steps need not be in order as they appear in the claims unless explicitly defined so.

Claims 1 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Masui, claims 2-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Masui, claims 4-7, 27-32 and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Masui in view of Kato, claims 8-9 and 33-34 in view of Conner and claims 10 and 35 in view of Stickling. These rejections are respectfully traversed. Following is a comparison of the prior art and these references and an explanation as how the claims patentably distinguish the invention over these references.

This invention relates to a process for manufacturing a covering by placing a decor part into an injection mold, closing the mold, thereby cutting the decor part to precise contours in the injection mold, pressing the decor part by injecting a molding compound against a surface of the decor part opposite at least one injection opening, connecting the compound and decor part during hardening and opening the mold.

The advantage over the prior art is that the precision cutting of the decor part allows for a time savings. The decor part is formed precisely so that the covering does not need additional cutting or trimming steps after forming. This gives rise to cost savings as well as the precise use of the decor parts leads to a decrease in scrap.

Masui does not disclose or suggest pressing the decor part by injecting a molding compound against a surface of the decor part opposite at least one injection opening. Masui shows a stamping process whereby the trim part is placed in the mold and the mold is partially closed, the resin is then extruded in the mold and the mold is then further pressed together thereby squishing the resin along the length of the trim part. In only one embodiment does Masui show that the resin is not simply placed on the trim part before the mold partially closes (see Figs. 1-5). This embodiment is disclosed as extruding the resin into a space between the upper layer member 10 (trim part) and male mold 2. The pressing of the upper layer member is only conducted by the mold halves (see col. 4, lines 48-51 and col.

5-6, lines 64-15) and not by the injecting of the molding compound. This also shows that Masui is a stamping process. Masui does not show or suggest that the resin ever presses the upper layer member 10. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the claimed invention is not anticipated by Masui, as set forth above. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Kato, Conner and Stickling do not rectify the deficiencies of Masui as they are non-analogous art to Masui. Masui is a stamping where a mold is used to press parts. Kato, Conner and Stickling are injection molding where the part is closed and the material is injected under some pressure to fill the mold and set with the trim layer. It is non-obvious to perform an injection of resin as in Conner, Kato or Stickling with the apparatus of Masui. Masui does not show an injection mold but only a male-female press. Additionally, Masui shows that the mold is not fully closed before the resin is placed in the mold (see col. 2, lines 42-44). Injection molding as described in Kato, Conner and Stickling can not take place in this manner before mold closure, and Masui is specific when resin is placed in the mold. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the claimed invention is patentably distinguishable over Masui in view of Kato, Conner or Stickling, as set forth above. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Regarding the use of Kato and Conner to show a wood veneer or sheet metal, the teaching of Masui must show that a wood

veneer or sheet metal is possible in order to combine Kato and Conner with Masui. As described above Masui is a stamping process where the upper layer 10 is stamped or pressed by the mold. Also as described above Kato and Conner show injection molding where the trim part is placed in the mold. Masui shows a completely different treatment for the upper layer 10 as from the treatment of such a similar part as in Conner and Kato. Masui also teaches that the material used is soft (see col. 4, line 16) as the material is stretched and formed by the molds. Masui describes the contemplated material at col. 6, lines 40-52 all of which are a soft and extremely pliable material. The use of a sheet metal or wood veneer in Masui is not possible from the teachings of Masui. Masui shows that before cutting the molds move together and affect the upper layer 10 (see Fig. 3). If wood veneer was placed in the mold of Masui the veneer would break at this point in Fig. 3. With sheet metal this would also cause problems and lead to operational difficulty. Masui can not be used for wood veneer or sheet metal, and thus Masui can not be combined with Kato and Conner to render the claimed invention. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the claimed invention is patentably distinguishable over Masui in view of Kato or Conner, as set forth above. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Since claims 2-11 and 28-36 depend from claims 1 and 27, respectively, claims 2-11 and 28-36 are also patentably

distinguishable over the cited references. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the application is respectfully submitted to be in condition for allowance, and prompt favorable action thereon is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #225/47721).

Respectfully submitted,



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APPENDIX
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1. (Amended) A process for manufacturing a covering or trim part with a directly molded-on carrier, comprising:

placing a decor part into an at least two-part injection mold;

closing the mold, thereby cutting the decor part to precise contours in the injection mold;

pressing the cut decor part by injecting a molding compound against a surface of the decor part opposite at least one injection opening;

connecting the injection molding compound with the decor part during hardening of the molding compound, wherein the molding compound forms the carrier; and

opening the injection mold and removing the covering or trim part and molded-on carrier.

27. (Amended) A method for making a covering or trim part with a directly molded-on carrier, comprising:

placing a decorative part having a veneer wood layer or sheet metal part in an at least two-part injection mold;

closing the mold, thereby moving a cutting edge provided on a first part of the mold past an inside wall area of a second part of the mold and thereby cutting the decorative part

to a precise shape by shearing off an outer edge of the decorative part;

injecting an injection molding compound into the mold after cutting the decorative part, which upon curing permanently bonds to the decorative part;

opening the mold; and

removing the covering or trim part and molded-on carrier from the mold.